

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A method of screening water-retentive candidate materials for potential rodenticidal activity in the field, the method comprising providing water-retentive materials as candidate materials, ~~said candidate materials being non-toxic to humans~~, feeding a plurality of rodents with the candidate materials *ad libitum* under laboratory conditions, measuring weight loss in the plurality of rodents ~~during an initial phase of the testing~~, and selecting, during an initial phase of testing wherein at least one of the plurality of rodents survives the testing, those candidate materials which lead to a mean weight loss of at least 15% of initial body weight ~~during said initial phase~~.

Claim 2 (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein those candidate materials which lead to a mean weight loss of at least 20% of initial body weight during said initial phase are selected.

Claim 3 (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein those candidate materials which lead to a mean weight loss of at least 25% of initial body weight during said initial phase are selected.

Claim 4 (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein those candidate materials which lead to a mean weight loss of at least 30% of initial body weight during said initial phase are selected.

Claim 5 (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the rodents are laboratory rats or laboratory mice.

Claim 6 (previously presented) A method according to claim 5 wherein the rodents are *Rattus norvegicus*.

Claim 7 (withdrawn) A method of screening water-retentive materials for rodenticidal activity, wherein a water-retentive material is fed to rodents and the rodents are tested to determine whether or to what extent the water-retentive material has disrupted water transport through the wall of the gut.

Claim 8 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 7 wherein the rodents are tested to determine whether or to what extent the water-retentive material has disrupted ion transport through the wall of the gut.

Claim 9 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 7 wherein the effect of ingesting the water-retentive material on the size or condition of the thymus gland is tested.

Claim 10 (previously presented) A method according to claim 14 wherein the rodents are examined for symptoms selected from the group consisting of: bloating of the gut, impaction or compaction of the caecum and impaction or compaction of the intestine.

Claim 11 (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said water-retentive

material is of natural origin.

Claim 12 (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said water-retentive material is cellulosic material.

Claim 13 (original) A method according to claim 12 wherein the water-retentive material is derived from corn-cobs.

Claim 14 (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the rodents are euthanized and examined *post mortem*.

Claim 15 (cancelled)

Claim 16 (withdrawn) A rodenticide comprising a water-retentive material as the active ingredient and a rodent attractant.

Claim 17 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 16 wherein the water-retentive material is cellulosic material.

Claim 18 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 17 wherein the water-retentive material comprises alpha-cellulose.

Claim 19 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 17 wherein the cellulosic

material comprises purified cellulose derived from the core of the cob of the DK 446 maize hybrid or from the core of the cob of an agonist of the DK 446 hybrid.

Claim 20 (withdrawn) A rodenticide comprising cellulosic water-retentive material as the active ingredient and a rodent attractant, the cellulosic water-retentive material being substantially free of corn-cob material

Claim 21 (withdrawn) A rodenticide comprising cellulosic water-retentive material as the active ingredient and a rodent attractant, the cellulosic water-retentive material being substantially free of material derived from the core of the cob of the DK 446 maize hybrid or from the core of the cob of an agonist of the DK 446 hybrid.

Claim 22 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 15, further comprising a binder.

Claim 23 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 15 which is in pellet form.

Claim 24 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 15 wherein the bait attractant comprises sweet material.

Claim 25 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to claim 24 wherein the bait attractant comprises molasses.

Claim 26 (withdrawn) A rodenticide according to any of claim 15 which in use disrupts ion transport through the wall of the gut of the rodent.

Claim 27 (withdrawn) A moisture-proof container of rodenticide as claimed in claim 15.

Claim 28 (withdrawn) A method of making a rodenticide comprising the steps of combining a water-retentive material with a rodent attractant, the water-retentive material being the active ingredient of the rodenticide.

Claim 29 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 28 wherein the water-retentive material is cellulosic material.

Claim 30 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 29 wherein the water-retentive material comprises alpha-cellulose.

Claim 31 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 28 wherein the cellulosic material comprises purified cellulose derived from the core of the cob of the DK 446 maize hybrid or from the core of the cob of an agonist of the DK 446 hybrid.

Claim 32 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein at least the water-retentive material is dried under conditions of elevated temperature and/or pressure.

Claim 33 (withdrawn) A method of making a rodenticide, the method comprising the step of combining cellulosic water-retentive material with a rodent attractant, the cellulosic water-retentive material being substantially free of corn-cob material and being the active ingredient of the rodenticide.

Claim 34 (withdrawn) A method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the the cellulosic water-retentive material is substantially free of material derived from the core of the cob of the DK 446 maize hybrid or from the core of the cob of an agonist of the DK 446 hybrid.

Claim 35 (withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein the rodenticide is pelletised.

Claim 36 (withdrawn) A method of alleviating rodent infestation comprising depositing in an area of rodent infestation a rodenticide as claimed in claim 16, the rodenticide being non-toxic to humans and disrupting the digestion of the rodents on being ingested.

Claim 37 (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 which includes a further phase of testing the at least one rodent surviving following said initial phase, ~~at least some of the rodents fed the selected candidate materials surviving said further phase.~~

Claim 38 (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein said initial

phase has a predetermined duration of 5 days.

Claim 39 (currently amended) A method according to claim 38 1 wherein said predetermined duration is 5 days all of the plurality of rats survive the initial phase of testing.

Claim 40 (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the rodents are tested to determine whether or to what extent the water-retentive material has disrupted water transport through the wall of the gut.

Claim 41 (previously presented) A method according to claim 41 wherein the rodents are tested to determine whether or to what extent the water-retentive material has disrupted ion transport through the wall of the gut.

Claim 42 (previously presented) A method according to claim 41 wherein the effect of ingesting the water-retentive material on the size or condition of the thymus gland is tested.